Mr. Stephen Rosenfeld, oped
The Washington Post
1150 15 St.,NW
Washington, DC 20071

11/11/92

Dear Mr. Rosenfeld,

If I had not been unwell when Weinstein's piece appeared I'd have written promptly and probably better. Although still unwell, the AP piece the Post carried the 8th alleging that some professional anti-Communist "scholars" have the proof that Harry Bridges was a secret member of the CP central committee prompts me to write now to alert you. Some of those who built careers on aspects of the cold war now have every interest in hiding the flaws in their work and in continuing cold-war thinking, which is one of the last things we now need. What I think we do need is to learn if we did make mistakes and if we did, what they are and how to avoid them in the future.

The FBI had the CP so thoroughly penetrated it was a joke of the time that it provided most of the CP's money. If Bridges had been a member, especially on the central committee, the FBI would have known and would have nailed him. It certainly wanted to and tried hard to do it.

We do not know what Klehr and Haynes quoted but it is not reasonable to presume that with a Bridges it would not have gotten the name of his union straight.

I won't be surprised if the Daily Worker for the period identifies all those elected to the central committee.

We also do not know all that Primakov told Weinstein but if he levelled he said that the Russians want to be very careful to avoid causing the CIA serious embarrassment. They did suspect Oswald may have been an American sleeper agent and he was openly anti-Soviet in the USSR. If the KGB got copies of what records the CIA released and analyzed them their disclosure would make a laughing stock of the CIA, as would any attention to the absolute insanity of what the CIA did under the persuasion of the nuts attached to Angleton. The State Department was horrified at the questions the CIA proposed being asked of the USSR, they were that offensive and calculated not to elicit responses. As one result, virtually no information on Oswald was sought.

We cannot undo the past but we'd be well advised to learn from it. This includes the press and it should now want to know how dependable sources it trusted really were.

What Weinstein says about the imminence of the CIA's disclosure of its Oswald and JFK assassination records is as ludicrous as it is ridiculous. And ignorant! If disclosures proceed as hoped for under the new statute, and there is every reason to believe they will not, then these disclosures will be delayed much,much longer than if made by the agencies of their own records. The agencies have no excuse for not proceeding forthwith. But the new scheme has those who know absolutely nothing at all about the subject-matter and what has been disclosed processing all the records from all sources.

One staff, even so much smaller than of the agencies combined, will handle all disclosures. It will be years, many years, before that staff can know whether the FBI has disclosed what the CIA withhholds and unless or until it does, it will continue to withhold what the CIA phonied-up reasons to withhold.

As the CIA has done about what it did disclose, sweating that it had to withhold in the nation's security what it had already disclosed.

The unjustified privacy claims the FBI makes to withhold can take years to get straight for a new staff.

It is an enormously complicated matter made much more complicated by those who did not really understand what they were doing when under the influence of those who knew exactly what they were doing.

Whatever flows now will drizzle through one tiny faucet.

Meanwhile, how nice a job Weinstein did for the miscreants who have been stonewalling from the time the first FOIA was passed.

Under Gates' promised expediting of processing and compliance, I still await the disclosure of information I requested two decades ago.

I hope this is clear enough. Apologies for my typing. It can't be any better.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg